Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/09/28 : CIA-RDP10-00105R000100820001-5

50X1-HUM

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/09/28 : CIA-RDP10-00105R000100820001-5

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/09/28 : CIA-RDP10-00105R000100820001-5

TOP SECRET

[redacted]

THIS DOCUMENT MAY NOT BE REPRODUCED

1380

**CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY**
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

50X1-HUM

20 August 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): The Planning and Conduct of Front Offensive Operations

1. The enclosed Intelligence Information Special Report is part of a series now in preparation based on the SECRET USSR Ministry of Defense publication Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought". This article discusses several principles relating to the planning and conduct of offensive operations of fronts which are based on the experience acquired through the conduct of research war games by the Military Academy of the General Staff in 1964-1965. Among the problems analyzed are the development of one overall plan for a front offensive operation, plans for the use of nuclear weapons, the participation of the fronts in the first nuclear strike, and methods of destroying large enemy groupings. This article appeared in Issue No. 3 (82) for 1967.

2. Because the source of this report is extremely sensitive, this document should be handled on a strict need-to-know basis within recipient agencies. For ease of reference, reports from this publication have been assigned [redacted] Codeword [redacted]

50X1-HUM

50X1-HUM

[redacted]

William E. Nelson
Deputy Director for Operations

FIRDB-312/02966-74

TS #205576
Copy # 12

[redacted]

50X1-HUM

Page 1 of 13 Pages

TOP SECRET

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/09/28 : CIA-RDP10-00105R000100820001-5

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/09/28 : CIA-RDP10-00105R000100820001-5



FIRDB-312/02966-74

Distribution:

The Director of Central Intelligence

The Director of Intelligence and Research
Department of State

The Joint Chiefs of Staff

The Director, Defense Intelligence Agency

The Assistant to the Chief of Staff for Intelligence
Department of the Army

The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence
U. S. Air Force

Director, National Security Agency

Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

Deputy Director for Intelligence

Deputy Director for Science and Technology

Deputy Director of Central Intelligence
for National Intelligence Officers

Director of Strategic Research

Director of Weapons Intelligence





TS #205576
Copy # 12

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/09/28 : CIA-RDP10-00105R000100820001-5

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/09/28 : CIA-RDP10-00105R000100820001-5



50X1-HUM

THIS DOCUMENT MAY NOT BE REPRODUCED

# Intelligence Information Special Report



**COUNTRY** USSR

**FIRDB** – 312/02966-74

**DATE OF INFO.** Mid-1966

**DATE** 20 August 1974

**SUBJECT**

MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): Certain Problems of Planning and Conducting Offensive Operations of Fronts
(Based on the experience of research war games)

**SOURCE** Documentary

Summary:

The following report is a translation from Russian of an article which appeared in Issue No. 3 (82) for 1967 of the SECRET USSR Ministry of Defense publication Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought". The author of this article is Colonel-General I. Glebov. This article discusses several principles relating to the planning and conduct of offensive operations of fronts which are based on the experience acquired through the conduct of research war games by the Military Academy of the General Staff in 1964-1965. Among the problems analyzed are the development of one overall plan for a front offensive operation, plans for the use of nuclear weapons, the participation of the fronts in the first nuclear strike, and methods of destroying large enemy groupings.

End of Summary

50X1-HUM

Comment:

Gol.-Gen. I. Glebov was a professor of the Academy of the General Staff of the Armed Forces in 1965. He has written about defensive tactics and tankborne operations in Soviet Military Review, No. 4, 1970, and No. 8, 1966, respectively. The SECRET version of Military Thought was published three times annually and was distributed down to the level of division commander. It reportedly ceased publication at the end of 1970.

TS #205576
Copy # 12



Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/09/28 : CIA-RDP10-00105R000100820001-5

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/09/28 : CIA-RDP10-00105R000100820001-5





Certain Problems of Planning and Conducting Offensive Operations of Fronts
(Based on the experience of research war games)
by
Colonel-General I. Glebov

The research war games conducted during 1964 and 1965 in the Military Academy of the General Staff made possible the discovery and development of a number of principles relating to the planning and conduct of offensive operations of fronts.

The games confirmed that when such operations are planned, the General Staff should make known to each front in the first operational echelon: its composition; the goals and tasks of the offensive operation; the quantity of nuclear munitions to be allocated to the front, and their yield and time of issue; the norms for the expenditure of material-technical means; the procedures for coordinating with adjacent fronts, strategic means, the Navy, the Air Defense Forces of the Country, and the strategic airborne landing forces, and the procedures for support (reconnaissance, operational camouflage, troop protection) and troop control.

The following are the principal factors which influence the determination of the number and composition of the fronts of the first and second operational echelons, the reserves which the Supreme High Command must have at its disposal in a theater of military operations, and the roles, locations, goals, and tasks of the offensive operation of each of the fronts: the concept, scale, and time of employment of strategic means in a theater as a whole and on each of its strategic axes; and the plan for using the fronts in a strategic operation in a theater of military operations.

50X1-HUM

The fronts of the first operational echelon should know for what purpose and at what time the strategic nuclear means will be employed, and which enemy troop groupings and targets will be hit and how severely. Only then will it be possible, when a front offensive operation is being planned, to accurately define such tasks as the destruction of the enemy directly opposing the front forces, and who has not been subjected to nuclear strikes by the strategic rocket forces; completing the destruction of enemy groupings that have survived strikes by strategic means and





Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/09/28 : CIA-RDP10-00105R000100820001-5

50X1-HUM
Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/09/28 : CIA-RDP10-00105R000100820001-5



retained their combat effectiveness; the destruction of those groupings in the depth of a theater that have not been subjected to strikes by strategic means; and tasks for the capture of important areas and enemy installations.

When the nuclear strikes of strategic means are being planned, the role of the fronts, especially those attacking in the first operational echelon, and the goals and tasks of their operations, should be taken into consideration, since they will be the first forces to exploit the results of these nuclear strikes by swiftly moving into the depth of a theater of military operations, completing the destruction of the enemy, and capturing his territory.

The plan for conducting the operations of the ground forces has a definite influence on the planning of the operations and combat actions of the other branches of the armed forces participating in a strategic operation in a theater of military operations. 50X1-HUM

During war games, such problems as the conduct of front offensive operations using only conventional means of destruction also were explored. Under these conditions the goals and scope of the operations will be somewhat different. The fact is that the deep rear area and reserves of the enemy will remain untouched by the strategic means, since the use of strategic missiles without nuclear warheads has been ruled out thus far and long-range aviation forces cannot be expected to carry out all these tasks.

The main role in carrying out the tasks of armed warfare in a theater of military operations will belong to the fronts. However, their conventional means of destruction do not have the effectiveness or range necessary to simultaneously and reliably hit enemy installations and forces in the operational depth. Consequently, this task will be carried out successively as the strike groupings of the advancing troops move forward.

We must also take into consideration the fact that when the enemy shifts to defensive operations he is capable of setting up a strong defense within a short period of time, particularly in regard to antitank measures, and of preparing and executing a wide maneuver of forces and means on threatened axes.

Since the troops of our probable enemies are completely motorized and have a large quantity of transport aircraft and helicopters, they are able to reinforce their groupings of troops in a short period of time by moving reserves by land and by air, not only from adjacent strategic axes, but also from other theaters of military operations. To overcome the



Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/09/28 : CIA-RDP10-00105R000100820001-5

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/09/28 : CIA-RDP10-00105R000100820001-5

50X1-HUM





opposition of the enemy, or, more precisely, to break through his defenses, it will be necessary to establish sufficiently high densities of tanks and artillery and to deliver powerful air strikes; and this will entail an additional expenditure of time and, not infrequently, the commitment of fresh forces into the engagement.

The results of research show that the goals of front offensive operations in which nuclear weapons are not used are to destroy the main forces of the groups of enemy armies deployed in the zones of the fronts and to take over those important areas and installations whose capture would create conditions favorable to the development of the offensive into the depth of the theater of military operations. These operations may be 500 to 600 kilometers in depth, i.e., approximately the same depth as the immediate tasks of front operations in which nuclear weapons are employed.

Let us examine certain problems involved in the planning of a front offensive operation in a nuclear war.

First of all, let us discuss the essence of planning in a modern front offensive operation. In our opinion it is to select, in conformity with the concept of the strategic operation in the theater of military operations, the soundest (optimal) variant of employing the forces and means available to achieve the assigned tasks and the ultimate goal of the front operation, and to work out in detail the methods selected for destroying the enemy and all the measures relating to coordination, the comprehensive support of combat actions, and troop control.

In connection with this, the following question arises: what should be the basic criterion in selecting the most desirable methods of destroying the enemy? Obviously, this criterion should be the effective exploitation by the front forces of the results of the nuclear strikes of the strategic rocket forces and of the nuclear strikes delivered by front means.

Of course, the nature of the actions of the front forces and their results will differ in each case, depending on how the war is started (after a relatively long threatening period or after a short one, or by surprise). Because of this, the view has been expressed that it is necessary to work out several plans for a front offensive operation, each of which would correspond to the specific circumstances under which the war is started. However, to plan a front offensive operation with several variants would naturally hinder the preparation of the troops to carry out tasks during an operation and would complicate troop control from the





Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/09/28 : CIA-RDP10-00105R000100820001-5

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/09/28 : CIA-RDP10-00105R000100820001-5



outset of military operations. Therefore, only one plan should be worked out for an operation for the conditions of nuclear warfare, and it should be based on the most desirable variant for destroying the enemy under the most difficult possible conditions, that of a surprise attack by him.

This type of planning requires that the command and the staffs continuously assess the situation and constantly keep track of changes in it and, when necessary (with the authorization of the High Command), institute the required level of combat readiness in the forces, especially in the rocket forces and in the air defense and aviation forces and means, and make timely and appropriate amendments in the plan of the operation.

Planning the use of nuclear weapons. In planning the employment of nuclear weapons during an operation, we use operational and technical methods of calculation. However, it must be admitted that the situation which could come into being as a result of the employment of nuclear weapons either by us or by the enemy is not always fully taken into consideration in either the theory or practice of operational preparation.

It seems to us that the planning of the use of nuclear weapons during a front operation should be based on a strict assessment of the possible results of the nuclear strikes by strategic means in a theater of military operations, an assessment not limited to the zone of the offensive of the given front. In addition, the front should have information as to expected enemy losses as a result of the actions of the Air Defense Forces of the Country and as to the possible results of nuclear strikes delivered by adjacent fronts and naval forces.

The calculation of the relative strengths of the two sides in quantity and yield of nuclear munitions and in delivery means at the beginning of the operation constitutes a highly important question. However, its solution will not provide even a rough approximation of how, starting with the first nuclear strike, the situation will develop during an offensive operation. To more fully ascertain how the use of nuclear weapons by the belligerents will influence the course of the operation, it is necessary to determine the possible results of their employment and how it will affect the relative strengths of the forces (overall and by axes) and the fulfilment of the basic and intermediate tasks of the operation. It is advisable to make such calculations, for example, on the expected results of the first nuclear strike at the close of the first day of the operation, when carrying out such tasks as the negotiation of large water obstacles and the capture of important enemy areas and installations, including those that constitute immediate and follow-up tasks of the operation. It is also



Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/09/28 : CIA-RDP10-00105R000100820001-5

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/09/28 : CIA-RDP10-00105R000100820001-5



necessary to take into consideration the possibility that the use of nuclear weapons by our strategic means and the front, as well as by the enemy, may result in the creation of zones of radioactive contamination and destruction.

Based on these calculations, that method for conducting the operation should be selected which most fully allows for the possible results of the use of nuclear weapons and of troop actions in carrying out the tasks and achieving the goal of the operation.

During research games, considerable attention was paid to determining the degree of destruction of enemy troop groupings and installations in order to ascertain what yields and quantity of nuclear munitions and what type of delivery vehicles to employ.

We shall note that the degree of destruction of the enemy is one of the most specific indicators and criteria of the tasks for nuclear weapons and, consequently, constitutes the principal question in the content of the decision and in the planning of the use of nuclear weapons. Therefore, it can hardly be considered correct when, in the allocation of tasks for the use of nuclear weapons, no determination is made of the degree of destruction of enemy targets.

An analysis of the nuclear munitions of various yields and of the different types of delivery vehicles used shows that the principal criterion of the degree of destruction of enemy nuclear means, tank groupings, command posts, communications centers, radiotechnical posts, and rear services installations, is the extent to which enemy personnel have been put out of action and a portion of their equipment simultaneously destroyed; and, in the event they are located in engineer shelters, the criterion is the degree of destruction of these shelters and the temporary or permanent cessation of the activities of the target.

When planning nuclear strikes on the axis of the main strike, it is advisable to endeavor to achieve approximately the following degrees of destruction of enemy personnel: for the means of nuclear attack, 80 percent or more; tank groupings, 60 percent; and for motorized infantry groupings, it depends on our availability of nuclear munitions and on how much the effects of using them may affect the speed of the advance of our forces.

The participation of the fronts in the first nuclear strike. The first nuclear strike of the fronts, as research has shown, should be



Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/09/28 : CIA-RDP10-00105R000100820001-5

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/09/28 : CIA-RDP10-00105R000100820001-5



considered a constituent part of the first nuclear strike organized by the Supreme High Command. In view of this, the question as to the relative proportion of the nuclear means of the fronts and, consequently, also their role in the first nuclear strike in the theater of military operations, is of interest. Some are inclined to base the determination of the relative proportion only on a percentage correlation of targets to be destroyed by strategic means and the means of the fronts and the quantity and total yield of the nuclear munitions to be employed by these means.

During the first strike in one of the war games, strategic means delivered 52 percent of the nuclear munitions and fronts delivered 24 percent. Their total yields were respectively 92 and 2 percent. It would appear that front means are of very slight importance in the first nuclear strike. However, this is far from being true. The fact is that strategic means are earmarked for the destruction primarily of strategic nuclear forces, industrial and administrative-political centers, aviation and its bases, surface-to-air missiles, ports, naval bases, and control posts. Front means carry out such tasks as the destruction of enemy operational-tactical rocket troops and large units of ground forces, i.e., those forces which stand in the way of the achievement by the front of the ultimate goal of the operation. The relative proportion of these tasks during a strategic operation is quite large.

The principal tasks of the fronts in the first nuclear strike may be: to destroy enemy operational-tactical means of nuclear attack; to hit the main troop groupings of his first operational echelon; and to disrupt his air defense and troop control systems. Among the most important enemy targets to be hit by front means when carrying out the above tasks may be Pershing, Sergeant, and Corporal missile battalions, surface-to-air missile battalions, depots of nuclear munitions, armored and motorized infantry divisions, command posts of army corps of the first echelon, 50X1-HUMrs.

Unfortunately, the number of missile launchers that fronts have with a launch range of more than 300 kilometers does not ensure the destruction of many important targets. During one war game, of 20 divisions, 13 surface-to-air missile battalions, and 14 army nuclear munitions depots that had been detected and expected to be destroyed, a front was able to plan for destruction, using its own means, only 12 divisions, 3 Hawk surface-to-air missile battalions, and 4 nuclear munitions depots. There was also no possibility of delivering strikes against the airfields where enemy delivery aircraft were based.



Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/09/28 : CIA-RDP10-00105R000100820001-5

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/09/28 : CIA-RDP10-00105R000100820001-5

50X1-HUM





In view of this, we came to the conclusion that the strategic means should be charged with the responsibility for the destruction of the following: airfields where delivery aircraft are based; operational-tactical nuclear means of the Mace and Pershing type; second-echelon divisions; surface-to-air missile battalions in the depth of the enemy dispositions; nuclear munitions depots; and command posts of army corps and higher.

Research war games have corroborated that strategic means are the principal executor of the tasks of the first nuclear strike in a theater of military operations. For a more effective solution of these tasks, it is essential to bring the strikes of the strategic means closer to the "line" of combat actions of the ground forces, making these means responsible for the destruction of tactical aviation, the bulk of the delivery means of operational-tactical designation, the second-echelon divisions, nuclear munitions depots, and important control posts.

The effectiveness of the first nuclear strike can be increased to a certain extent by having tactical missile battalions participate in it.

The nuclear strikes delivered by front and strategic means were coordinated by fixing the time for the delivery of the strikes and by allocating the objectives to be destroyed. Two methods were used to do this.

The first was to establish a line dividing the enemy territory between front and strategic means for the delivery of nuclear strikes. This line was drawn at a distance of 170 to 250 kilometers from the national border. This method simplifies the coordination of strikes and makes it possible to keep secret the scale on which nuclear means are employed and the nature of the means. However, it complicates the adoption of a decision for the operation and the planning of the first nuclear strike, since the front troop commander does not know the enemy targets to be destroyed by strategic means. Moreover, it makes it difficult to use strategic means against the most important targets in the front zone of destruction.

The second method is to divide the objectives in the zones of the offensive of the fronts between the strategic and front means. This method is more flexible and permits the fronts to purposefully and effectively plan the use of their strategic means. It is true that in this case the commanders must know in advance which objectives are to be hit by strategic means, the quantity and yield of the nuclear munitions used, and the types of bursts. In this case, however, measures will have to be taken to





Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/09/28 : CIA-RDP10-00105R000100820001-5

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/09/28 : CIA-RDP10-00105R000100820001-5

50X1-HUM





preclude the divulging of information relating to the use of strategic means.

50X1-HUM

Besides allocating the objectives to be destroyed between the strategic and front nuclear forces, it is essential to establish in advance a safety line for our troops near which the strategic means are not to employ surface and air bursts. According to experience gained in games, the minimum distance between surface bursts and the line of contact of the troops of the two sides should be:

As regards the coordination of the time of nuclear strikes by strategic and front means, the games permit the following conclusions to be drawn.

First, it is essential that the front missiles be launched no later than 5 to 8 minutes after the launching of the medium-range strategic missiles, so that the strikes against targets deep in the enemy rear and those against his groupings of ground forces within the zone of the offensive of the fronts will be simultaneously delivered. If the actions of aviation in the first nuclear strike are to be timely, the aircraft should time their takeoff so that they reach the enemy radar range perimeter at the same time the missiles are launched.

Second, in view of the increasing capabilities of the enemy for detecting the launching of our missiles and the takeoff of our aircraft, it is advisable to launch our operational-tactical missiles at the same time as our medium-range strategic missiles. The front aircraft should take off as the launching of the missiles begins. This variant will ensure that the beginning of the first nuclear strike will contain a large element of surprise and will guarantee that the rocket troops and front aviation will not sustain an enemy strike prior to the beginning of the launching of the missiles.

According to the experience of war games, the first nuclear strike by front means was usually limited to one launching of the missiles participating in it and one sortie of front aviation. Taking into account





Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/09/28 : CIA-RDP10-00105R000100820001-5

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/09/28 : CIA-RDP10-00105R000100820001-5



our capabilities for reconnaissance and final reconnaissance of enemy targets, the duration of the strike was considered relatively stable. It was expressed by the following indices: 45 to 60 minutes for the delivery of a meeting nuclear strike and, when the enemy made a preemptive nuclear strike, up to several hours. (During one game the strike lasted three hours and 30 minutes.)

Methods of destroying large enemy groupings. In the process of carrying out its immediate or its follow-up tasks during an operation, a front will have to defeat large enemy groupings, which, as a rule, constitutes the main purpose of these tasks.

In our opinion, a large enemy grouping should be considered to be any grouping of enemy forces and means (including nuclear means) whose actions could seriously and decisively affect the course of a front offensive operation. Its composition may vary: at the beginning of an operation, it may consist of the main forces of the first echelon of a group of armies; and while the operation is in progress, it may consist of several army corps.

Under modern conditions, different methods may be used to destroy such enemy groupings: simultaneously or successively, on one or on several axes. It depends on the results of the nuclear strikes by strategic means; the capabilities of the front for using nuclear weapons and the readiness of its forces to swiftly exploit the results of its nuclear strikes; the nature of enemy actions; and the characteristics of the theater of military operations.

At present the principal method of destroying large enemy groupings during a front offensive operation is to deliver massed or group nuclear strikes (depending on the state of readiness of the front forces and means and the availability of precise information on the location of targets) coupled with swift troop actions to complete their destruction. Under certain circumstances this task can be accomplished by using nuclear weapons alone (with the participation of the strategic means).

In a number of cases enemy groupings can be defeated by coordinated troop actions in which chemical weapons and conventional means of destruction are used or merely by troop actions in which conventional means are used; in this case it will be necessary to quickly achieve decisive superiority over the enemy in forces and means (especially in tanks and artillery) on the principal axes of troop operations in order to accomplish these tasks within a short period of time.

TS #205576
Copy # 12



Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/09/28 : CIA-RDP10-00105R000100820001-5

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/09/28 : CIA-RDP10-00105R000100820001-5





Ground forces (motorized rifle and tank large units) will complete the destruction of the enemy either immediately after the nuclear strikes or as they approach the areas where his groupings are located, using enveloping, outflanking, and encircling movements, at the basis of which will be operations by axes. In one case, for example, when a high degree of destruction has been inflicted on the enemy by nuclear weapons, limited forces (large units, individual units, and even detachments), or a portion of the forces, may be employed for this purpose while the main forces develop the offensive (swiftly advance) into the depth. Also, we must not rule out the possibility that a situation may occur that requires that the defeat of the enemy be completed by operations of the main forces while limited forces are assigned the task of developing the offensive into the depth.

These are some of the conclusions as to the planning and conduct of a front offensive operation that were made on the basis of research war games.

50X1-HUM

TS #205576
Copy # 12



Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2012/09/28 : CIA-RDP10-00105R000100820001-5